

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Previously Presented) A metal oxide particle comprising a core part and a surface layer,

wherein the molar fraction of cerium and zirconium constituting a ceria-zirconia solid solution in the core part is higher than the molar fraction of the cerium and zirconium constituting a ceria-zirconia solid solution in the surface layer;

wherein the molar fraction of the metal constituting the second metal oxide in the surface layer is higher than the molar fraction of the metal constituting the second metal oxide in the core part; and

wherein the second metal oxide is selected from the group consisting of alumina, zirconia, titania and ceria.

2. (Original) The metal oxide particle according to claim 1, wherein said core part and said surface layer each comprises a plurality of primary particles.

3. (Currently Amended) The metal oxide particle according to claim 1-~~or~~², wherein said second metal oxide is ceria.

4. (Currently Amended) The metal oxide particle according to claim 1-~~or~~², wherein said second metal oxide is zirconia.

5. (Currently Amended) The metal oxide particle according to claim 3-~~or~~⁴, wherein said surface layer further comprises an oxide of at least one metal selected from the group consisting of alkaline earth metals and rare earths.

6. (Currently Amended) An exhaust gas purifying catalysis comprising a noble metal supported on the metal oxide particle according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 5~~^{claim 1}.

7. (Original) An exhaust gas purifying catalyst comprising platinum supported on the metal oxide particle according to claim 3.

8. (Original) An exhaust gas purifying catalyst comprising rhodium supported on the metal oxide particle according to claim 4.

9. (Previously Presented) A process for producing the metal oxide particle according to claim 1, the process comprising:

providing a sol containing at least a population of ceria-zirconia solid solution colloid particles and a population of second metal oxide colloid particles differing in the isoelectric point with each other,

adjusting the pH of said sol to be closer to the isoelectric point of said population of ceria-zirconia solid solution colloid particles than to the isoelectric point of said population of second metal oxide colloid particles, thereby aggregating said population of ceria-zirconia solid solution colloid particles,

adjusting the pH of said sol to be closer to the isoelectric point of said population of second metal oxide colloid particles than to the isoelectric point of said population of ceria-zirconia solid solution colloid particles, thereby aggregating said population of second metal oxide colloid particles onto said population of ceria-zirconia solid colloid particles aggregated, and

drying and firing the obtained aggregate.